

Royal Mail International Update

January 2020

This update, about incidents which have affected international mail services throughout January, was issued by Royal Mail Customer Services on Thursday 6 February 2020.

Information about issues currently affecting the movement of international mail, including international bank holidays, can be found at: www.royalmail.com/internationalupdates.

Africa

Libya

Start date: 16 July 2014

End date: Ongoing

Mail services to Libya are currently suspended until further notice.

South Africa

Start date: 1 October 2017

End date: Ongoing

Very poor service has been observed for mail into South Africa. South Africa Post Office has advised this is due to abnormally high volumes of mail.

This has created bottlenecks in their processing locations due to space constraints and processing capacity. The communicated recovery plan expected at the end of October does not look to have resolved the issues and with the peak Christmas volumes, this is likely to increase delays. Delays are approximately 35 days.

Asia

China

Start date: 23 January 2020

End date: 3 February 2020

Due to reduced Customs operations over the Chinese New Year period, some gateways into China will not be conducting clearance work for international letters and parcels on 25, 26, 28 & 30 January 2020. As a result, deliveries into China may experience delays during and immediately after this period, due to the possible build-up of mail & parcels waiting to clear customs.



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China

Start date: 28 January 2020

End date: Ongoing

Impact to items leaving the UK for delivery in China

Our service is experiencing some minor delays to delivery on the ground in China.

Impact to items leaving China for delivery in the UK

We are processing items from China for delivery in the UK as usual.

The Universal Postal Union (UPU) communicated 28 January 2020

The Chinese government is taking measures to prevent the transmission of the novel coronavirus (2019-nCoV) by disinfecting all mails into or transiting via the Wuhan Mail Centre.

For international mail (letters, parcels and Express Mail Service items) destined for Hubei Province (postcodes 430000–449999), China Post will contact the addressee by phone before delivery to ask about their delivery preferences. The mail can then either be stored temporarily at the postal outlet, made available for pick-up from the outlet, delivered to a smart parcel locker or delivered by other non-face-to-face methods.

Delivery methods for international inbound mails are thus agreed by the recipient before delivery. As result of these steps, delays are expected for International inbound mail to China.

Hong Kong

Start date: 28 January 2020

End date: Ongoing

Hong Kong Post has informed us that due to measures taken by the government since Tuesday 28 January 2020 to reduce the risk of the spread of the Coronavirus (2019-nCoV), all inbound and outbound mail processing (letter-post, parcel-post and EMS items) are subject to disruption.

Indonesia

Start date: 30 January 2020

End date: Ongoing

Indonesia Post has informed us the customs clearance process is expected to be delayed as result of changes to the De Minimis Exemption on shipments imported into Indonesia, effective from 30 January 2020 when the De Minimis Threshold will be reduced.

As a result, delays are to be expected in the processing and delivery of letter-post, parcel-post and EMS items containing goods.

Macao

Start date: 30 January 2020

End date: 1 February 2020

Macao Post has advised that all civil servants will be exempt from working on the 30 and 31 January 2020, to minimize the spread of the novel coronavirus. Macao Post is suspending all postal services for those two days.

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Mongolia

Start date: 27 January 2020

End date: 2 March 2020

Due to the outbreak of the novel coronavirus (2019-nCoV) and its rapid spread, the Mongolian authorities have closed all educational institutions in the region and have strictly prohibited all public activities from 27 January to 2 March.

As a result, all inbound and outbound mail processing is likely to face some disruption.

Philippines

Start date: 12 January 2020

End date: 14 January 2020

Severe ashfall following the eruption of the Taal volcano affected the areas of Batangas, Laguna and Tagaytay City in the province of Cavite. Some international flights were cancelled, which delayed the processing of international mail. Normal flights have now resumed. However, some delays are likely as the Taal Volcano's activity has not yet ceased.

Syria

Start date: 6 December 2012

End date: Ongoing

Mail services to Syria are suspended until further notice.

Australasia

Start date: 11 December 2019

End date: 23 January 2020

Bushfires in New South Wales affected the collection and delivery of mail for over a month. Normal processing has now resumed, but delays were likely as a result of the mail backlog.

Europe

European Services

Start date: 28 November 2019

End date: Ongoing

French lorry drivers and the National Road Transport Organisation has announced a roadblock at the French-Belgian Border on 28 November 2019 to protest the French Government's decision to reduce tax relief on commercial diesel fuel. As a result, this affected UK outbound mail between France and the Belgian border, and mail transiting through Belgium with delays of up to 24 hours

European Services

Start date: 7 January 2020

End date: 21 January 2020

Rail services through the Channel Tunnel were reduced while maintenance work was carried out. This resulted in delays of up to 24hrs for mail to: France, Germany, Netherlands, Belgium, Italy, Spain, Switzerland, Austria, Hungary, Czech Republic, Slovakia, Luxembourg, Poland, Denmark, Norway and Sweden.

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Finland

Start date: 27 January 2020

End date: 18 February 2020

There is currently a strike in Finland by the Paper Industry which is affecting road transportation in Finland. This started on 27 January and is due to continue until Monday February 17, unless an agreement is reached beforehand.

As a result, this is likely to result in some delays mail traffic due to extended travel time until the strike finishes.

Iceland

Start date: 10 December 2019

End date: 29 December 2020

A snowstorm hit Iceland on 10 December, there were severe delays to international and domestic transportation, which subsequently delayed mail into and out of the country.

Iceland

Start date: 7 January 2020

End date: 3 February 2020

Severe snowstorms hit Iceland again resulting in disruption to services for nearly a month.

Italy

Start date: 1 February 2017

End date: Ongoing

We have become aware of processing delays on all inbound international traffic arriving in Italy.

To reflect the current transit times, we are temporarily extending our delivery aims as follows:

Untracked products: 6-8 working days; Tracked products: 4-6 working days and Tracked and Signed For products: 5-7 working days.

Italy

Start date: 15 January 2020

End date: 23 January 2020

The temporary closure of the airport in Bari from 15-22 January for maintenance work, is likely to have resulted in delays to mail services in the area.

Norway

Start date: 1 August 2018

End date: Ongoing

Norwegian Post has confirmed their International Mail Hub due is continuing to experience delays following modernisation.

Although there have been improvements, a proportion of Tracked mail is still experiencing delays daily. Norwegian Post has confirmed further enhancement activities are planned for processing improvements.

Slovakia

Start date: 4 January 2020

End date: 7 January 2020

Slovakia Post performed IT system maintenance from 4-6 January 2020. All postal operations will be closed between these dates, resulting in some delays.

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Sweden

Start date: November 2017

End date: Ongoing

Delivery scanning of 'Tracked' has improved in recent months, however, it still isn't where it's expected to be and we'd recommend customers use Tracked & Signed services to Sweden for more reliable tracking information.

Ukraine (Crimea & Sevastapol)

Start date: 18 March 2014

End date: Ongoing

Mail services to Crimea and Sevastapol are suspended until further notice.

Latin America & Caribbean

Brazil

Start date: 16 October 2017

End date: Ongoing

We've been advised that there are currently delays with mail into Brazil. We believe this may be due to industrial action, however this is yet to be confirmed. However, what we can say is that any mail posted in the last 5-7 days could be in a backlog and any mail affected may experience at least a 10-day delay from posting to delivery.

We are taking steps to re-route where possible and expect any new postings from the end of this week to be clear of the backlog but could still be subject to some delay in delivery of 3 days or more.

Cayman Islands

Start date: 28 January 2020

End date: 31 January 2020

A 7.7 magnitude earthquake occurred approximately 80 miles east of the islands, causing damage to buildings and infrastructure. A tsunami alert was issued and aftershocks were experienced. As a result, mail processing and delivery were disrupted.

Jamaica

Start date: 28 January 2020

End date: 29 January 2020

Postal operations have been disrupted following a 7.7 magnitude earthquake which occurred in the Caribbean basin on Tuesday 28 January. The International Mail Centre in Kingston, Jamaica, was evacuated, resulting in some disruption to mail operations.

Venezuela

Start date: 4 July 2017

End date: Ongoing

The local situation has disrupted mail flows into Venezuela and our supplier has had to stop delivering mail into Venezuela. As a result, we can no longer accept any mail for Venezuela, any mail on hand will be returned to sender.

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Middle East

Israel

Start date: 23 January 2020

End date: 25 January 2020

Events are being held in Jerusalem from 22-24 January 2020 to mark 75 years since the liberation of Auschwitz. This may cause delays in the transport and delivery of all mail types (letter-post, parcel-post and EMS), as well as mail handling at the airport during this period.

Yemen

Start date: 27 March 2015

End date: Ongoing

Mail services to Yemen are currently suspended until further notice.

North America (USA & Canada)

Canada

Start date: 9 October 2017

End date: Ongoing

What's the issue?

Canada Post are experiencing delays to delivery services due to high volumes of incoming mail. Delivery aims for Royal Mail services for Canada are normally 5-7 working day, however, International Standard and International Tracked & Signed are severely delayed, taking 3-4 weeks to be delivered.

What alternative is there?

If you have been posting using our Royal Mail 'Tracked and Signed service', we highly recommend you use our 'Tracked service' option which is providing much speedier processing and delivery times. Simply select the correct service and label. If you are not set up on our Tracked service, please talk to your usual Royal Mail contact who will help you with the next steps. Finally, for our Customers using the Post Office to send your items, simply ask for a "Tracked service" at the counter.

A note about Customs in Canada

Whilst Customs clearing processing times are totally outside our control, it is worth remembering that Canada is one the countries with the lowest de-minimis of 20 Canadian Dollars (circa £11). This means that any goods equal or above that value will systematically go through a clearance process thus creating additional delays. Most of what our customers send is under DDU (Delivered Duty Unpaid) meaning that the recipient is responsible to pay any duty or taxes. Read more on our country guide [page royalmail.com/canada](http://royalmail.com/canada), thank you.

Canada

Start date: 17 January 2020

End date: Ongoing

Due to heavy snowfall, the city of St. John, Newfoundland has declared a state of emergency with all businesses to remain closed and all residents to stay at home. The St. John mail processing plant, distribution centre and offices in the St. John metropolitan and Eastern Avalon districts have been closed since Friday 17 January with collection and distribution of all postal products suspended in the affected areas.

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Other

Ascension Islands/Saint Helena

Start date: 6 February 2018

End date: Ongoing

Air transportation to the Ascension Islands/St Helena is currently reduced due to ongoing runway work. Unfortunately, given the location of the countries, there is no viable alternative which would arrive any earlier. Although, customers can continue to send mail there will be significant delays in the delivery of all products. Please note: Mail to the Falkland Island is not affected.

Help and advice

More information about Royal Mail's international products and services is available on our royalmail.com/international/pages. Alternatively, if you're a business customer you can contact your usual Royal Mail service contact or call our dedicated Business Centre on 08457 950950. If you're a residential customer, you'll need to call 03457 740740.

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